

July 14, 2010

Sheila K. Goodenough
MA

RE: Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision

Dear Committee Members:

This is to request your consideration of the repeal of the GPO and WEP. Here is my story: I worked for 13 years in the private sector in business and contributed to social security. Then I spent ten years at home raising my son. I knew that I would return to work someday, but I knew that I did not want to return to the business world. It was not a career path that had been fulfilling to me personally and it would only allow me two weeks per year to be with my husband and my son. I had always been interested in teaching. I thought teaching would be a profession which would be fulfilling to me in a way that business had not and would also allow me to spend summers at home with my son.

During those ten years, I studied Spanish when I was able to find a babysitter. It was a long process, but I persevered and with many classes and much studying late into the night (after my son was asleep) I came to the point when I dared to try to take the MTEL, the required test for certification to teach in Massachusetts. I passed the test on my first try! I began by substitute teaching for a year and I loved it. After this first year of substituting I signed a contract to teach Spanish at the middle school level. I had found (at 45 years old) what I really wanted to do with my life.

I spent two years completing a Master's degree from University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and in the fall of 2008 I began teaching at the high school level. It was then that I first learned of the GPO and WEP. What a disappointing discovery! I am penalized because I decided to become a teacher after having contributed to Social Security.

As you celebrate the 75th birthday of Social Security, please remember teachers like me; teachers who love their new career and who have worked hard to become public servants. My decision is going to be whether I leave teaching or whether I continue to teach, but face the penalty of having a reduced income upon retiring. Please don't penalize me because I want to continue to teach! Please repeal the GPO and WEP!

Thank you very much for reading my story.

Sincerely,

Sheila K. Goodenough